FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH • MUKWONAGO

OCTOBER 23, 2026



Here's What's Happening at FCC



Pull up a chair. Take a sip. Fair warning: this one may mess with a few Sunday School lessons. You might want to switch to decaf.

Let's talk about Abraham. Genesis 22 is one of those stories many of us learned as a lesson in extraordinary faith. God tells Abraham to take Isaac, the son he loves, up a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham gets up early. He gathers the wood. He takes his son. He climbs the mountain. He binds Isaac. He raises the knife. And then, at the last possible second, God stops him.

For years I heard that story and was told to admire Abraham's obedience. But I have a question. Would you have even gathered the firewood? I wouldn't. If I believed God was telling me to kill one of my children to prove my faithfulness, I hope I would have enough sense to say no.

What I was taught was that saying no to God was the problem. You were supposed to obey. You were supposed to trust. And if something in you was screaming, "This is wrong," apparently that was the part of you that needed fixing. Who are you to question God? God is God. You are not. Just trust the Bible.

I understand the argument. But there are stories in the Bible that bother me. They should bother me. Children die. Women are treated like property. Entire populations are slaughtered, and God's name gets attached to it.

I used to think faithful people were not supposed to admit that those stories made their stomach hurt. But I keep wondering why the God who gave us compassion would ask us to shut it off before opening the Bible.

Take something I heard about growing up: the "age of accountability." Maybe you heard about it too. The idea was that children who died before reaching some undefined age would certainly be welcomed by God. It brought enormous comfort to people. There is only one minor problem, the Bible never actually gives us an "age of accountability." So where did that idea come from?

I suspect it came from people who simply could not believe that a loving God would condemn a child. Their compassion mattered. Their conscience mattered. Something inside them said, "That cannot be what love looks like."

And instead of throwing that instinct away, they listened to it. We do this more than we admit. We read one passage beside another. We wrestle. We ask questions. We look at Jesus.

We ask what sounds like Jesus. What looks like Jesus. What moves toward mercy, healing, and the person everybody else has already pushed aside.

Rachel Held Evans once told a story about visiting an Amish woman whose church had shunned one of her children. The family was not supposed to eat at the same table as that child. The mother added another leaf to the table. Technically, she was obeying the rule. Practically, she was passing the pie to her kid. I love that. She just loved her child too much to pretend that rejection was holy.

I have seen parents do versions of that. A mother decides that her child's mental health matters more than what somebody at church might say. A father realizes that whatever he has been taught, he is not going to stop loving his kid. And sometimes loving your kid makes you go back and look at the theology again. Some people call that compromise. I think it may look a lot like Jesus. Jesus had a habit of putting people before the religious rules that were crushing them.

He touched people he was not supposed to touch. He ate with people respectable religion wanted nowhere near the table. He healed when the rule said he should wait until tomorrow. And every time somebody tried to make the rule matter more than the person standing in front of him, Jesus chose the person.

Trusting God does not require us to stop listening to the part of us that knows when something is wrong. Faith asks us to pay attention to compassion too. That ache we feel when someone is being harmed is not something we have to explain away. It may be one of the things worth listening to.

If your theology requires you to sacrifice your child to remain faithful to it, put down the knife. If it asks you to stop seeing another person's humanity, put down the knife. If it tells you cruelty becomes holy if you can attach God's name to it, put down the knife.

Sometimes faithfulness looks like climbing the mountain. And sometimes faithfulness looks like refusing to make another human being the sacrifice.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Mark



Please Keep These Loved Ones in Your Prayers

Those facing illness or health concerns:

- Dorothy C.
- Sue P.
- Rae-Ellen
- Debbie
- Nancy
- Sue R's friend's son
- Jan
- Rick
- Brianna

Those facing grief:

- Family of Monty

Those needing ongoing love and support:

- Our shut-ins and all who live with chronic health challenges
- Our church leadership, as they serve and discern
- All who are struggling or in need—seen and unseen
- The Mission School of Hope & Clinic and the communities they care for

May God's healing, strength, and peace surround each one.

Need Prayer? Send your request to prayer@fccweb.net

Would you like to be part of our Prayer Chain?
Please email the church office at office@fccweb.net to let us know.

FOOD FOR FAMILIES

Thank you for those of you who were able to help with the September "Food of the Month" for the Food for Families. There are now 9 families participating in the program.

For the month of October, we are asking for donations of pancake mix, syrup, and a 6-pk of apple sauce. There is a list of needed items for the program next to the bulletin board in the narthex. The list will help with finding food items that are on sale when you are shopping. Your donation of one or two extra items in your grocery cart will help the families who we are servicing!

Thank you!
Joanne and Janine

Dear FCC Family,

I wanted to share a note with you that I received via email this morning. It is from the mom, Diana, of one of the families we provide weekend food for. She touched my heart, and I hope she touches yours. We make a difference in our community, and I want you to know that! Special thanks to Janine Coley, Kay & Tom Rowntree, Renee Kowalik, Scott Chapman, Edith Fork, and Linda Haeger for being our Food for Families rock stars!
Joanne



Good Morning,

My name is Diana Najera, and my daughter is Aranza González, a second-grade student at Clarendon Avenue. She has been receiving food assistance, and I just wanted to let you know that our family's situation has improved. I sincerely appreciate all the support you have given us. My family and I are truly grateful for your kindness and generosity. May God bless each and every one of you in the congregation and reward you abundantly for all that you do.

Thank you so much for everything. God bless you all!

HOPE CENTER
HELPING HANDS BUILDING HOPE

Hello, church ! This month we are donating toddler clothes and diapers for the Life Connection in Mukwonago and continuing this drive through November.

They said they have plenty of donations for newborns, but virtually nothing for older children. I will transport our donations to them when we have a carload. For those who wish to continue donating backpacks and small household appliances for The Hope Center, they would greatly appreciate it. I will transport those items to them as well. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Dear Supporting Congregation,

Formerly known as Cooperating Congregations of Waukesha County, Hope Center celebrates over 50 years of service to disadvantaged women, children, and men in Waukesha County. We are grateful for your continued support of our outreach and programming efforts to reduce the poverty-related risks that contribute to homelessness by providing the basic needs of food, clothing, hygiene items, and housewares, all free of charge.

To continue providing these services and items at no cost, we will be hosting our annual fundraising dinner on Thursday, November 19th, 2026, at the Brookfield Conference Center. This year's theme is "Gathering Hope," which focuses on the idea that we are stronger together. When we gather, we can strengthen our community and deepen our collective impact.

If you would, please share this exciting event with your congregation in the following ways:

- Encourage them to attend- Purchase tickets **HERE.**
- Make a gift basket for the silent auction.
- Become a sponsor.

We have enclosed a **flyer** that can be posted on your information board, inserted into your weekly bulletin, or distributed to groups and individuals.

Additionally, if you plan to donate an auction item, please fill out the included **Auction Donation Factsheet** and return it to us with your item(s) no later than Friday, November 6th. We ask that all baskets be valued at a minimum of $100, as this is the most effective value and garners the highest bids. If the value is less than $100, we may combine it with another basket. You can also sponsor a basket by donating $100, and we will make the basket in your name.

If you have any questions, please contact Becky at (262)549-8726, or email at rarnold@hopecenterwi.org.

Thank you,

Becky Arnold
General Manager
Hope Center

HOPE CENTER
HELPING HANDS BUILDING HOPE



Church Directory ****LAST CALL****

Would you like to be in the Church Directory? You can fill out the directory form **HERE.** If you would like to include a photo please email them to office@fccweb.net.



Worship This Weekend

We will be worshiping in-person and on YouTube.

Visit these links for important information:

YOUTUBE CHANNEL
SONG LYRICS
ORDER OF WORSHIP

Praise PLAYLIST

Sunday's Praise Song Sneak Peak
"Christ Be Magnified" Cody Carnes

CONTACT US

Church Office
262-363-7249
231 Roberts Drive
Mukwonago WI 53149
office@fccweb.net



It's Easy to Give to FCC.....

Because we are flexible! There are several ways:

1. The traditional way, by putting your offering in the collection plate during weekly church services. Offering envelopes are available in the church office. Contact us at office@fccweb.net.
2. Bill Pay through your bank account. You can talk to a teller or Customer Service if you have questions about it. If you like to use Bill Pay to pay your monthly bills, you can add FCC to your list of creditors. It's quick and easy.
3. Online. You can give through Tithe.ly or Paypal (HERE) and click the "Give" Button at the bottom of the page.
4. If you prefer to make lump sum offerings, you can make a Direct Charitable Distribution from your 401(k) or other retirement fund directly to FCC. There are no income taxes on this type of distribution because the money does not come to you; it goes directly to the "charity" of your choice, i.e., FCC. Talk to your financial advisor who can set up Direct Charitable Distributions as often as you wish—monthly, quarterly, annually etc. Making a Direct Charitable Distribution actually makes your money go farther!